

English Literature and Composition

2007 - 2008

Brief Description of Course

The entire focus of the course will reflect an attempt to achieve measurable standards adhering to the Pennsylvania State Standards in Reading and Writing. The overall reading goal is to provide for the experience of literature, the interpretation of literature, and the evaluation of literature engaging a wide variety of texts in group analysis and individual interpretation. The writing goal will allow for students to view writing as a developed discipline that includes collecting information, formulating ideas, and determining their relationship to one another. Students will also be asked to make judgments that show increasing intellectual sophistication in terms of logic and critical thinking. This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the AP English Course Description.

Unit Information

Unit Name or Timeframe:

The Greeks/ Sophocles and Euripides

Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone, Medea (two weeks)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

-Development of Theater, Classic Period, Oedipus Trilogy, Aristotle's Poetics, tragic hero in Greek tragedy, satyr plays, Aeschylus's Fables, Chorus, physical and mechanical elements of theater, Sophocles' innovations

-Vocabulary terms: hubris, peripeteia, nemesis, tragic hero, tragic flaw, dramatic irony, deus ex machina

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

-Explication of tragic hero elements in Oedipus Rex

-Themed writings: sight versus blindness, filial piety, performance analysis, fate versus freewill, gods' laws versus man's law

-"What's in a Name?" project

Unit Name or Timeframe:

Elements of Fiction (three weeks)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

-A strong analysis of short fiction, literary devices studied using the works of varied authors, fiction evaluations, the idea of figurative language

-Vocabulary terms: plot, structure, characterization, theme, symbolism, allegory, fantasy, humor, irony, setting, point of view, tone, style

-Thematic means of "writing about literature" (The basis for this process revolves around the central ideas of being able to write clearly as well as being able to write persuasively.)

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

-Short stories from various authors: Graham Greene "The Destructors", Alice Walker "Everyday Use", Katherine Mansfield "Miss Brill", Tobias Wolff "Hunters in the Snow", James Joyce "Eveline", Eudora Welty "A Worn Path", Shirley Jackson "The Lottery", Nathaniel Hawthorne "Young Goodman

*Review of the course
for the purpose of the AP English exam*

Brown", Albert Camus "The Guest", Frank O'Connor "The Drunkard", O. Henry "A Municipal Report", F. Scott Fitzgerald "A New Leaf", Guy de Maupassant "The Necklace", Ernest Hemingway "Soldier's Home"

- Literary analysis and identifying elements of fiction

- Timed writings in which students will be asked to analyze short stories within a given time period (samples and a scoring rubric will be offered at the end of each individual write)

Unit Name or Timeframe:

Poetry Unit (two to three weeks)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

- Poetry comprehension and then evaluating poetry (Students must be able to look at a piece of poetry and ask three questions: 1) What is the poem's central purpose; 2) How fully has the purpose been accomplished; 3) How important is this purpose? The first question helps to bring about an understanding of the poem itself. Questions two and three are used in evaluating the poem. Question three, alone, judges the poem on a "scale of significance." Hopefully, this type of background knowledge will bring about an appreciation, as well as an understanding, of poetry in as many forms and possibilities.)

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

- Reading various forms of poetry for garnering a more eclectic viewpoint (Most poems will be read with a companion piece in order to offer a comparison/contrast-type discussion)

- Questions for study from the simplistic, "Which poem is more interesting and more meaningful?" to the more complex, "Which poem communicates the more genuine poetic emotion (be able to justify your answer)?"

- Sonnets: study as well as analyze various sonnets (final assignment will be to write an original sonnet)

- Poems will come from varying time periods and may include: John Keats "Ode to a Grecian Urn", John Donne "The Canonization", Robert Frost "Home Burial", T.S. Eliot "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", Margaret Atwood "Siren Song", William Blake "The Lamb", Elizabeth Bishop "The Fish", E.E. Cummings "l(a"

- Timed writings in which students will be asked to analyze various forms of poetry within a given time period (samples and a scoring rubric will be offered at the end of each individual write)

Unit Name or Timeframe:

The Sound and the Fury (two to three weeks) *Dynamic Language*

Content and/or Skills Taught:

- Faulkner's narrative style, narrators of the novel driven by stream of consciousness, organization of the novel, symbolic elements

- Comprehension of literary critique aimed at dissecting the novel into its various components

- Understanding Faulkner's experimental form of writing (characterized by frequent time shifts, narrator shifts, unconventional punctuation and sentence structure, as well as a stream-of-consciousness technique that reveals the inner thoughts of characters to the reader)

- Describing Faulkner's "South" in the context of the historical South and understand how the South was changing socially and economically in the early 20th century

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

- Pre-reading activity: selections from Absalom, Absalom, "Two Soldiers," and "The Bear"

- Reading journal: Students will keep a journal attempting to analyze and keep note of Faulkner's use of point of view, time, form, and character. In this journal, students should cite passages and raise

questions for class discussion. In the second chapter, for example, students might make mention of Quentin's shadow in the water as well as the concept of time that permeates throughout.

-Critical Essay

-Possible essay topics include the following: 1) How does Faulkner use narrative structure to develop his primary characters? 2) How does the Compson family (and notions of family "blood") change throughout the course of the novel? 3) How does Faulkner present time throughout the novel, and what is the relationship between narrative and symbolic time and the changing historical times in the early twentieth century South?

4) By the end of the novel, Mrs. Compson has forbidden the mention of Caddy's name. What is significant about the fact that Caddy does not have her own chapter (and that she is nameless by the end of the novel)?

-Literary terms quiz

-PowerPoint presentation: Faulkner's South

Unit Name or Timeframe:

The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark (two weeks)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

-Making warranted assertions about literature

-Analyzing figures of speech and literary terms

-Structuring ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive and sophisticated way, including comparison/contrast

-Writing responses to literature

-Analyzing, from a critical standpoint, various aspects of the play

-Comprehending the concept of a "play within a play"

-Analyzing the various soliloquies found throughout the play (being able to identify common and relevant themes found in each soliloquy).

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

-*"Something is Rotten in the State of Denmark"*: Students will identify the "rotten" elements found throughout the play (weaknesses, ambition, obsession)

-Using context clues to interpret two of Hamlet's soliloquies ("To be or not to be"; "What a piece of work is a man"), then checking their understandings with other sources such as a Shakespearean criticism text

-Critical analysis of the "minor characters" in the play. What is their overall contribution to the play?

-Creating an annotated bibliography for critical analysis of the play

-Power Point Presentation detailing the five acts (group project)

Unit Name or Timeframe:

Literary Research Project (four ongoing weeks)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

-Modern Language Association format, plagiarism definition

-research (primary and secondary), thesis statement, note taking including quote versus paraphrase, source cards, outline, parenthetical citations including what to cite and what not to cite, conferencing, revising/editing, final copy, oral presentation, visual aid

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

-selecting a topic, analyzing literature, generating a thesis statement, research paper proposal, source cards, note cards, parenthetical citations, constructing an outline, writing about literature, formatting an MLA paper and Works Cited, peer editing

Unit Name or Timeframe:

Othello, the Moor of Venice (two weeks)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

- Folger Library Edition of Othello
- View excerpts of five film versions, from 1948 Olivier to 1994 Fishbourne and Verdi Opera version, utilizing Friedman performance history handouts
- Examining and analyzing performance variances, direction, scenery, directorial choices, costumes, and lighting schemes
- Reading play aloud, focusing on language, rhetorical, and theatrical devices. Study uses of meter, iambic pentameter, heroic couplets
- Studying, selecting, memorizing and presenting sonnets

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

- Writing critical analysis using library sources, examining themes, characters, and other important elements
- Transliterating passages and soliloquies from text
- Preparing presentation of Desdemona's diary/ envision and write Act 6/ prepare "Path of the Handkerchief" mural/poster

Unit Name or Timeframe:

Existentialism Unit (two weeks)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

- Introduction to Existential thought and literary texts include Albert Camus The Stranger, "Myth of Sisyphus", Franz Kafka Metamorphosis, Video - Groundhog Day
- Critical examination of history and evolution of metaphysical inquiry culminating with groundbreaking work of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche
- Decoding texts with discussion, reflection, reading, and various research modalities
- Absurd man, nihilism, metaphysics

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

- Critical reading and analysis
- Writing assignments, short and long, one analytical, one assessing critical overview of novel
- Applying existential critical literary analysis to poem, play or film and present to class

Unit Name or Timeframe:

All Quiet on the Western Front (one to two weeks)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

- World War I (The Great War): its causes and effects, nationalism, patriotic idealism, camaraderie (esprit de corps, comradeship), corrupting effect of power, shared humanity versus man's inhumanity to man, destructiveness of war, Lost Generation, Treaty of Versailles contributing to WWII and rise of Hitler
- Vocabulary terms: personification, imagery, antithesis, simile, metaphor, apostrophe, hyperbole, aphorism, symbolism, foreshadowing, irony, apposition, caesura, point of view, atmosphere, dark humor, shrapnel and trench mortars, Central Powers, Allies, copper driving band, lorry, poison gas, trench warfare

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

- Identifying kinds of characterization, first-person versus omniscient third-person, making inferences about characters
- Critical reading and analysis
- Themed writings such as images that linger from the novel, can Paul truly speak for a whole generation, novels message(s) and effects on society and history
- Reporting on the war, writing a soldiers diary, charting a day in the life of a WWI nurse, creating propaganda posters, writing a scene from Pauls play Saul, creating a chapter of the novel written as a scene in a play

Unit Name or Timeframe:

David Copperfield (four concurrent weeks)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

- Structure and theme
- Victorian England including morals and the poor, roles of society, social classes, prisons, education, treatment of children, legal profession, Industrial Revolution, fallen women
- The balance of good and evil, novels moral ambiguity, contrasting pairs of characters
- Vocabulary terms: debtors prison, almshouse, metaphor, simile, personification, point of view, allusion, irony, symbolism, caricature, farce, picaresque novel, euphemism

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

- Themed writings such as effectiveness of David as observer and narrator, capability of Dickens as creator of memorable characters, Dickens as social critic, Dickens as humorist, this novel as a bildungsroman, serialization and unifying devices of the novel, novels statements, notion of hero, role of coincidence, novels definition of family
- Identifying and analyzing subplots including Little Emily and Steerforth, Wickfield and Uriah Heep, Dr. Strong and Annie, Mr. and Mrs. Micawber
- Creating a visual map of Davids journeys in life, writing a letter from Little Emily to her family

Unit Name or Timeframe:

Death of a Salesman (one week)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

- Structure and plot in modern drama including flashbacks, staging and use of sound, reality versus illusion, varying perceptions of reality, definitions of success, contradictions in character, American Dream including distortion of it, importance of setting
- Vocabulary terms: symbolism, imagery, point of view

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

- Themed writings such as examination of father-son relationships, technique in regard to setting, Willy as a tragic hero, compare/contrast Oedipus the King with Death of a Salesman as tragedy, Linda as the only major female character in the play, Lindas role in Willys tragedy and/or contribution to his tragedy
- Creating a timeline of Willys life with high and low moments differentiated

Unit Name or Timeframe:

A Raisin in the Sun (one week)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

Harlem Renaissance, W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington ideologies, Jomo Kenyatta and the Mau Mau Movement, Prometheus, Jim Crow laws, Realism, varying interpretations of the American Dream, feminism

-Vocabulary terms: stereotype, verbal irony, dramatic irony, epigraph, dialect, mood, assimilationist

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

-Themed writings such as Dig Walters influence on Mama and Walter, Mama as a help or hindrance to her children, the plays universality, compare/contrast the dreams of the Lomans in Death of a Salesman with the dreams of the Youngers, what is the real drama of the play, compare and contrast the ambitions, needs, and societal opinions of the major female characters

-Identifying and analyzing conflicts including character versus character, character versus self, character versus society

-Writing another scene for the play, rewriting a scene of the play as a short story, creating story boards of scenes

Unit Name or Timeframe:

The Chosen (one to two weeks)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

-The Conflict between Tradition and Modernity: understanding the differences between Hasidic tradition and American secular modernity

-Symbolic elements and motifs: comprehending the concept of "perception" as well as interpreting the relationship between father and sons as described in the novel (suffering is a central motif that must be understood in order for any type of relevance to be found.

A major emphasis must be placed on the central idea of the Talmud.)

-Vocabulary terms: Talmud, Hasidic, secular, Orthodox, Yeshiva, Zionism, tzaddik

-World War II and the baseball game must also be interpreted for clarification.

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

-Possible essay topics include the following: 1)How does the author use silence as a narrative technique? 2)Based upon your content knowledge, and from a historical perspective, what does the title of the novel mean to you? 3)Where are women in The Chosen? How do they play a part in the story? If they are absent, why do you think Potok excluded womens voices?

-Quotation identification

Unit Name or Timeframe:

Fences (one week)

Content and/or Skills Taught:

-Interpreting and inheriting history: understanding how the characters are in conflict with their past, therefore they cannot fully comprehend the approaching future

-The Choice Between Pragmatism and Illusions as Survival Mechanisms:

understanding how the characters' choices directly correspond to the opposite perspectives from which they perceive their mutual world

-Death and baseball motifs

Major Assignments and/or Assessments:

-Essay: interpreting various lines from the play in terms of a motif such as "Death ain't nothing but a fastball on the outside corner."

-Identification of the symbolic elements found in the play: trains, fences, and the devil

-Timed writing in which students give examples to support the author's choice of the play's title

Textbooks

Title:High School Reprint Compact Bedford Introduction

Publisher: Bedford/St Martins

Published Date: March, 2000

Author: Michael Meyer

Description:

This textbook encompasses world literature including fiction, poetry, drama, and critical thinking and writing sections. Furthermore, the text delves into writing about literature, critical reading and thinking, perspectives on literature, literary theory, and more.

Title:Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound and Sense

Publisher: Heinle

Published Date: 14 August, 2001

Author: Thomas R. Arp

Second Author: Greg Johnson

Description:

This textbook offers a comprehensive literature and writing anthology with poetry, prose (fiction and nonfiction), drama, and literary terms glossary and commentary.

Other Course Materials

Material Type:Other

Description:

- *All Quiet on the Western Front, Remarque
- *David Copperfield, Dickens
- *The Stranger, Camus
- *Oedipus Rex, Sophocles
- *Oedipus at Colonus, Sophocles
- *Antigone, Sophocles
- *Medea, Euripides
- *Othello, Shakespeare
- *Hamlet, Shakespeare
- *A Raisin in the Sun, Hansberry
- *Death of a Salesman, Miller
- *The Sound and the Fury, Faulkner
- *The Chosen, Potok
- *Fences, Wilson
- *Selected poems, short stories, and essays
- *Pocono Mountain School District Research Paper Guide